

# Top 10 Spring vegetable gardening tips



## 1. Soil quality

The start and end point of a sustainable garden is your soil quality. If your produce is not growing well it's probably down to the soil and PH levels. Start by testing the PH level of your soil. If it's too low introduce more acidity to the soil. This can be done naturally by adding items such as coffee grounds, tea bags, organic mulch and natural rainwater.

## 2. Be Waterwise

Managing the flow of water to your garden is important to maintaining optimal growth. Take an old plastic bottle and pierce a few holes in the bottom. Plant the bottle in your garden between your plants, with only the cap showing, and fill it up with water. Make sure the lid is secured. The water will disperse slowly and as needed into the soil. When it is empty all you do is screw the cap off and refill or leave the lid off if it's raining to collect water.



## 3. DIY Compost

There's no need to spend a fortune on fancy composts, because the solution can be found in your kitchen bin. Create a homemade compost heap by collecting vegetable peels, fruit waste, tea bags, coffee grounds, and grass cuttings and mixing it with some garden soil. Leave this for a while in a damp area to decompose, and use it as needed in your garden. It will provide much-needed nutrients to the soil.

## 4. Introduce Earthworms to your patch

Earthworms increase aeration, filtration, and nutrient cycling which greatly improves the overall soil health. If you want to attract more earthworms to your garden avoid using heavy chemicals and adapt more natural practices to add nutrients back into the soil.



## 5. Start small

If you're a beginner or a small family, start by planting a smaller crop. Plant the number of vegetables you think your family will eat to avoid food waste and pests that are attracted to the leftovers.

## 6. Plant placement

Research the requirements of your crops. Make note of how much sun or shade they need, and if they can be planted with other plants. Group plants that have the same needs together and avoid planting plants that omit biochemicals with other produce as they will not grow. For example, tomatoes are biochemical emitters so it would not be advisable to plant them in your vegetable patch with your carrots.



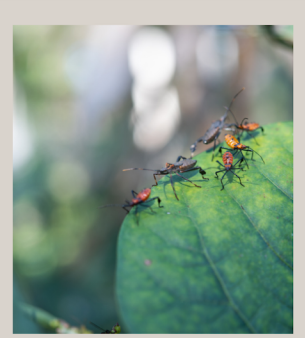
## 7. Design



The design of your garden plays an important role in the efficiency of your garden. When planting use raised plant beds to easily separate your crops. Create pathways between your crops to make harvesting easier. Add labels to distinguish between different underground vegetables. Allow for an adequate amount of room when planting as your plants and vegetables need room to grow.

## 8. Pesticides

Pesticides and insecticides are toxic to our health and the environment. Make an organic spray to ward off unwanted pests. This can easily be done by mixing a solution of salt and water and spraying it on and around your crop. One can also make a solution with eucalyptus oil or a mixture of garlic, onions, and water.



## 9. Animal protection



Every gardener has run into a monkey or two. An easy way to monkey-proof your garden is by creating a simple shade cover. All you need is shade cloth, wire, and white bendable piping. Thread the wire through the pipe and secure it to the plant bed on either side to create an arch then, secure the shade cloth over the arches and to the plant bed to create a safety screen.

## 10. Harvesting

It's important to check your garden daily. Leaving fully ripened produce attracts pests so be sure to harvest in time. Pick vegetables when they are smaller for a better flavour and fruit when it is as ripe as possible. Keep in mind that your produce is not going to look picture-perfect like the food you buy at the grocery store. Keep a diary on when you planted the produce to track harvesting times and make notes on weather patterns that may have affected the harvest. Harvesting is a fun activity for the whole family to enjoy.

